

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia: Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the Center to Advance, Monitor and Preserve University Security ("CAMPUS") Safety Act of 2013. The CAMPUS Safety Act previously passed the House of Representatives by voice vote as a standalone bill in the 110th and 111th Congresses and was included in the House-passed versions of the College Opportunity and Affordability Act of 2008 in the 110th Congress and the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2012 in the 112th Congress. It is my hope that the CAMPUS Safety Act will be signed into law during the 113th Congress.

The purpose of the legislation is to enable our institutions of higher education to more easily obtain the best information available on how to keep our campuses safe and how to respond in the event of a campus emergency. The bill creates a National Center for Campus Public Safety ("Center"), which will be administered through the Department of Justice. The Center is designed to train campus public safety agencies in state of the art practices to assure campus safety, encourage research to strengthen college safety and security, and serve as a clearinghouse for the dissemination of relevant campus public safety information. The Director of the Center will have authority to award grants to institutions of higher learning to help them meet their enhanced public safety goals.

Over the past few years we have seen numerous tragedies occur at colleges and universities, including the disastrous events that occurred at Virginia Tech, Northern Illinois University and more recently at Old Dominion University that took the life of Congressman Elijah Cummings' nephew. Unfortunately, these events were the first of their kind at their schools and there was insufficient knowledge on how to prevent the tragedies or how to most effectively respond in their aftermath. While there is growing awareness that such threats are possible anywhere, many schools still have not developed safety protocols that would prepare them to maximize the prospects of preventing such tragedies or to effectively respond to them should they occur despite sound prevention efforts.

Our nation's colleges and universities play a large role in the development of our next generation of leaders and we should assist them in their efforts to keep our campuses and our students safe. The Clery Act already requires schools to have safety plans in order to participate in the Title IV deferral student aid programs; unfortunately there is no one place for schools to obtain reliable and useful information. It makes little sense to require the thousands of institutions of higher education to start from scratch and individually go through the cost and effort to develop comprehensive plans. Instead, they ought to be able to obtain guidance and assistance, including best practices, from a "one stop shop" like the Center.

The CAMPUS Safety Act will help institutions of higher learning understand how to prevent such tragedies from occurring, and how to respond immediately and effectively in case they do. Although this bill was originally drafted in direct response to the Virginia Tech shootings to specifically assist college and university campuses, I should note that in the wake of the tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, public elementary and secondary

schools and their governing agencies will be able to access the informational and training benefits of the Center.

I urge my colleagues to cosponsor and support this important legislation to ensure that our institutions of higher education have access to the information necessary to keep their schools safe.